



In Transit May/June 2010

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk
of the General
Manager*

It's all connected

Many of the challenges we face at Metro involve a number of related issues, actions or policies. Solutions don't always come easily, but they are rarely beyond our grasp.

Here's a case in point.

As we move ahead with the security improvements detailed in my last *In Transit* message, I am reminded of how operator and customer security are interwoven with our fare policies and practices.

Over the next few months we'll be focusing attention on fare policy with the Metropolitan King County Council and the Regional Transit Committee. We've long understood the relationship between our complex fares, customer satisfaction, fare evasion, and operator security. Now, as a result of reports requested by the County Council, we'll be in a better position to demonstrate those relationships.

We recently submitted a report on fare evasion to the County Council. Metro operators played a crucial role in the successful completion of this study. During the survey, operators diligently recorded nonpayment and underpayment of fares by customers

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Operator Loren Ott tries out a prototype operator shield while driving Route 150.



Metro tests operator shields

A team of representatives from Transit Operations, Vehicle Maintenance (Component Supply Center and Fleet Engineering), and Safety is making good progress on the research and testing of operator compartment shields on Metro buses. The investigating team also includes operators of the year **Ineke DeBoer** (current) and **Nate Chapelle** (past).

The shields, intended to enhance transit operator safety and security, are being installed by the Component Supply Center on a range of bus types. Each base will test one shielded bus, as follows:

- South Base: 6800 – 60' New Flyer hybrid
- Atlantic Base: 4100 – 40' Gillig trolley
- North Base: 3200 – 40' Gillig
- Central Base: 2300 – 60' New Flyer high-floor
- Ryerson Base: 2800 – 60' New Flyer low-floor

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General Manager

at the farebox. Many operators also completed a questionnaire asking for their ideas to reduce fare evasion. That input is summarized in the report, and we gave it full consideration as we formulated our recommendations to the council for strategies to address fare evasion (see page 3).

I want to thank our operators and ATU 587 leadership for your support and contributions to this effort.

We now estimate that about 4.8 percent of our riders contribute to fare evasion, with 1.9 percent paying too little and 2.9 percent avoiding payment entirely. This deprives our budget of about \$62,000 each week, or a little over \$3.2 million per year (roughly 2.5 percent of our total fare revenue).

As we take a fresh look at our fare policies and practices, at the council's request we also plan to look at our fare relationships with regional transit partners—Sound Transit and others—to develop recommendations for better regional fare coordination. This June we'll submit a follow-up report to the council about fare policies. The report will include comments on the current state of fare integration, discount fares, regular fares, and more. It will likely include recommendations to further simplify and align Metro and Sound Transit fares, using our common ORCA fare card.

It's worth noting that Sound Transit recently instituted fare changes that were designed, in part, to better align their fares with ours—which is a good start.

While we have been doing this work, another process has gotten underway. When the County Council adopted the 2010 budget, it also created a Regional Transit Task Force that is charged with recommending a policy framework to guide future service investments or contractions at Metro.

The task force has begun its work (see page 6), and by September it will have identified short-term and long-

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Security systems make transit centers safer



This emergency call box at the Burien Transit Center provides an instant connection with Metro's Security Monitoring Center and activates video cameras at the scene of the call.

Providing safe, secure facilities for customers and employees is vitally important to Metro Transit. One of the many tools we use to fulfill that commitment is the transit center security system program, which installs emergency call stations and surveillance cameras to enable real-time reporting of security incidents. These systems allow Metro Transit Police and local law enforcement agencies to respond more rapidly, reduce incidents overall, and help in the prosecution of crimes that do occur.

The program has installed emergency call and surveillance camera security systems at the Burien, Northgate, Eastgate, Issaquah Highlands, and Redmond transit centers. A new system is being added to the Aurora Village Transit Center, and planning is underway for installation at other sites.

The call stations and cameras are connected via the Internet to Metro's Security Monitoring Center, a facility at Atlantic/Central Base that is staffed 24/7. When a customer or employee presses an emergency call button, he or she has instant two-way communication with the Monitoring Center. The surveillance cameras are activated simultaneously and begin transmitting video of the incident to the Monitoring Center, where it is recorded. Monitoring Center personnel immediately assess the situation and call for police response if necessary.

When no incident is in progress, the on-site cameras are focused on potential vandal targets so Monitoring Center staff can use them to check on possible trouble spots.

The presence of these systems seems to be a strong deterrent to crime. It also helps customers act on Metro's "See Something, Say Something" message. "The new security system at Burien Transit Center has encouraged our patrons to call in dozens of potential trouble situations each week, allowing rapid law enforcement response when needed," said Facilities Security Coordinator **Gail Israelson**. "A downward trend in incidents at this site is already apparent."

Service Quality Chief **Jim Kost** is making sure the word gets out to Metro operators about these systems. "We're starting a driver awareness program on the new security systems at our transit centers so operators can understand the benefits, help inform customers how the system works, and reinforce Metro's commitment to passenger safety," Kost said.

Fare evasion costs Metro

When it adopted the 2010 budget, the Metropolitan King County Council directed Metro to estimate the extent and cost of fare evasion and to include operators in the process of making those estimates. In February and March, all Metro operators at each base were asked to record detailed information about fare evasion on two full days. The results showed that about 2.9 percent of passengers paid no fare (excluding free trips and children under age six), and another 1.9 percent paid just part of the fare. Based on these figures, fare evasion costs Metro about \$62,000 a week in lost revenue.

Operators had three main suggestions for addressing fare evasion:

- **Fare simplification** (i.e., eliminating zones and peak-hour surcharges). This is an important part of Metro's current work with Sound Transit and other agencies to better coordinate regional fares, which the County Council also directed Metro to do.
- **Elimination of the Ride Free Area and its pay-on-exit policy.** Metro will further analyze the data to measure fare evasion levels on trips where passengers pay on exiting the bus. Metro is working with the City of Seattle to update the estimated costs and benefits of the Ride Free Area.
- **More Transit Police and fare checkers.** Fare enforcement patrols will help evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy and assess whether to revise procedures for assigning Transit Police and/or hire additional Transit Police or security officers. Starting this fall, Metro will begin using its new proof-of-payment system on the RapidRide A Line on Pacific Highway South. If the system is successful on the A Line, Metro may consider having it play a larger role throughout the system.



Almost five percent of Metro's customers fail to pay all or part of their fares.

A big thank-you to all the Metro operators who helped us measure fare evasion and made recommendations to reduce this problem.

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Operator shields

- East Base: 3200 – 40' Gillig
- Bellevue Base: 3200 – 40' Gillig
- Spare: 3100 – 35' Gillig

Buses will be assigned to cover different types of service, including different times of day and use of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. Each day, operators from each base will be able to drive the shielded bus on their regular routes. Other operators can check out a demo bus while it is parked at their base.

The first bus with a demonstration shield was put into service in April. The final one is expected to complete testing by the first of July. Each bus will be evaluated for one month, with operators providing written feedback on a form to be analyzed by Research and Management Information. Training and Safety staff members and others will also provide input as time permits.

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General Manager

term objectives for transit service investments and formulated a service policy based on those objectives. The group's job is not an easy one. Its members are learning how tightly policy issues, service objectives, and implementation programs are intertwined. We fully support the task force's efforts, and look forward to its report.

When we receive the report and consider its implications, along with the direction of our own fare policies and practices and our relationships with other transit providers, we'll be sensitive to any proposed changes that might negatively affect our employees, customers, and revenues. An intricate web ties them all together.

—Kevin Desmond, General Manager

KUDOS IN TRANSIT



Bob Martinsen won't have to look for a parking spot at work for a while.

■ **Martinsen named top Vehicle Maintenance employee** — Mechanic **Bob Martinsen** was named 2010 Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year on April 29. A valued member of the VM team since February 1979, Martinsen has worked as a mechanic on the monorail (4 years), on the historic waterfront streetcar (2 years), and on buses at Atlantic (a.k.a. Central Base) Maintenance. He currently works the yard truck in the Atlantic yard, where he rushes to the rescue, rain or shine, for everything from loose mirrors to buses that won't start. Managers and co-workers honored his 31 years of diligent, consistent service and his tendency to be a behind-the-scenes, unsung hero. **Mike Eeds**, supervisor of Atlantic Maintenance, called him "the type of employee that everyone loves, but who is seldom

recognized. He comes to work every day and does his job, no supervision required. He is the man behind the scenes who makes the wheels on the bus go 'round, and helps make Metro a transit system we can all be proud of."

■ **Rideshare employee runs Boston Marathon** — On April 19, Rideshare Operations Vanpool Services Representative **Julie Paone** completed the 114th Boston Marathon. With an overall time of 3 hours, 42 minutes and 25 seconds, Paone finished in the top 46 percent of all 26,127 runners and in the top 30 percent among women runners. To participate in the event, she first had to meet a time standard in a prior qualifying race. *In Transit* congratulates Paone on her achievement.

■ **Transit operations chief honored** — The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve recently honored North Base Operations Chief **Suzanne Keyport**. The organization recognizes employers and employees who practice leadership and personnel policies that support employee participation in the National Guard and Reserve forces. "Many reservists and guardsmen return home from deployment to find themselves unemployed or out of touch with their employers," said Operator **Tim Wilson**, who nominated Keyport for the award. "While deployed in Afghanistan, I was able to stay in touch periodically with my base chief...She was diligent in helping me resolve some pressing benefit issues and facilitating the transition back to work after being gone for nearly 18 months. Her thoughtfulness and professionalism reflect well

on Suzanne as a person and as a representative of King County Metro Transit."

■ **Bike-to-work video features operator** — North Base Operator **Ed Bowman**, a 10-year bicycle commuter, was among King County employees featured in a "May is Bike Month" video focused on bicycle commuters. The video, which includes Ed riding his recumbent bike, is available online at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/employees/media/healthheroes/BikeCommunting.aspx>.

■ **Operator honored by community** — On April 26, the Issaquah Valley Grange named East Base Operator **David Waggener** Man of the Year for his volunteer contributions to his community. Waggener, a Metro driver for the past six-and-a-half years, has served as a docent for both the Issaquah Historical Society and Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery since 1998, has chaired the Issaquah Cemetery Board, helped organize a community fund drive for the slain Lakewood police officers, and has served as a post commander and (currently) assistant quartermaster of Post 3436 of the Issaquah Veterans of Foreign Wars. Waggener also accepted U.S. Representative Dave Reichert's request that he serve on a volunteer board for the Honor Flights Program, which flies World War II veterans to Washington, D.C. to view the memorial honoring those who served in that war. "Even in this economy, it should be a priority to get these vets to Washington, D.C. as a way to repay our debt to them," Waggener said. "They're getting up there in age and can't wait for better economic times."

Transit operators of the month

April 2010

Atlantic Base: **Richard Bryant**

Central Base: **Paul Canlas**

Eastside Campus: **Ehsanollah Zarghami**

North Base: **Daniel Gonzalez**

Ryerson Base: **Lori Cogar**

South Base: **Michael Krause**

May 2010

Atlantic Base: **Kirk Wilson**

Central Base: **David Vance**

Eastside Campus: **Robert Simpson**

North Base: **Michael Sattler**

Ryerson Base: **Frank Sykora**

South Base: **Shannon Strozier**



2009 Metroadeo champion Tammy Klein negotiates the serpentine, one of 11 challenges in the operator competition at the International Bus Rodeo in Cleveland.

■ **New supervisors-in-training selected** — *In Transit* congratulates the 24 candidates chosen to be supervisors-in-training. SITs are competitively selected based on merit, work record, written exams, interviews, and role-play performances. In seniority order, they are: **Enrique Calderon Jr., James Wells, George Kalbflesch, Corina J. Rostrom, Richard Randall, Bryan Oh, Steve Johnson, Wayne Flesch, Mark Otero, Dennis Caputo, Carroll Humphrey, Esther Metcalf, Benjamin Limargo, Michael Cooper, Gary Gustafson, Craig Jamieson, Gerald Kennedy, Harujdin Vojnikovic, Tamera Stuart, Kevin Haptonstall, Keith Rodmyre, Michael McGrath, Stephen St. Aubin, and Dustin Toms.**

The Transit Operations SIT test team reports being impressed with all of the applicants who participated in the highly competitive process, selected or not. All displayed a depth of knowledge, creativity, and motivation that reflected well on the rich and diverse culture of Metro employees. All full-time transit operators are encouraged to prepare for, and participate in, future SIT recruitments.

■ **Metro shines at International Bus Rodeo** — An elite team from Metro competed in the APTA International Bus Rodeo in Cleveland in early May. Atlantic Base Operator **Tammy Klein**, winner of the 2009 Metroadeo, finished a very respectable eighth among 39 entrants in the 40-foot coach class. In her first international competition, Klein finished ahead of last year's national champion and bested all Washington state competitors entered in her event. Metro's Vehicle Maintenance team, made up of mechanics **Larry Fitzpatrick** and **Ryan Stringfellow** (East Base) and **Arvin Vulliet** (North Base), finished fifth among 22 teams in the Mechanic competition after paying most of their own trip expenses because budget constraints limited Metro to paying only their entry fee. The combined scores of Metro's contingent earned them the joint title of "Third Grand Champion" and were a scant 0.52 percent short of snagging second place overall.

■ **Health hero passes away** — **Mike "Bucky" Buchanan**, a 24-year veteran mechanic of Metro's Vehicle Maintenance team, passed away on March 10 while hiking, one of

his favorite activities. As a Metro employee, Buchanan had a gift for drawing out the best in anyone he met. As a loaned executive to the Combined Charities program, he also touched the lives of employees across many departments. A solid family man and respected co-worker, he will be missed by many. His Health Hero video is still online at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/employees/media/healthheroes/Bucky2010.asx>.

***In Transit* online**

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County website at www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/MetroTransit/InTransit.

SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division

■ **A greener clean** — Metro has long recycled some of the trash our customers leave behind on buses. Thanks to a new agreement with Allied Waste, bus cleaning is about to get even greener. We clean our coaches with a combination of hand and vacuum power, and already sort recyclables like newspapers and pop cans out of the hand-cleaned debris. Under the new agreement, our vacuumed debris will also be recycled, saving money by reducing the volume of waste Metro needs to dispose of. In the past, vendors had no interest in recycling this co-mingled debris, but according to Recycling Coordinator **Talon Swanson**, that reluctance has changed. “It is thanks to the success of King County residential co-mingled recycling programs that vendors are now willing to accept this material,” Swanson said.

■ **Industry peer review on passenger security** — In collaboration with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Metro hosted a national industry peer review on passenger security at the end of May. Transit security experts from Boston; Portland, Ore.; San Francisco; and Toronto toured Metro facilities, talked to Base Security Committee members, and met with other Metro representatives and local law enforcement officials. They shared best practices and discuss security ideas for the Metro system, including security in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.

■ **New transit signs are coming** — Metro has developed a new family of bus stop signs that are



A new prototype sign is installed at Fourth Avenue S. and S. Jackson Street in April.

more informative, easier to read, more eye-catching, and easier to maintain than our current signs. Smaller versions are already being installed at some stops, and large ones will be fabricated and installed at major bus stops as funding becomes available. For now, you can check out the three new large designs at the following locations:

- Fourth Avenue S and S Jackson Street, northbound, on the near side next to Union Station
- Fourth Avenue S and S Jackson Street, northbound, on the far side (on the transit island)
- Third Avenue and Pike Street, northbound, on the far side next to Century Square. This sign includes a new-style yellow Skip Stop sign.

■ **Transit technology projects reach new milestone**—Two of Transit’s large technology projects, the Transit Radio System Project and the On-Board Systems/Communication Center System Project, passed a significant milestone with the successful completion of system integration testing on April 23. This test was the first in a series of test phases leading up to the start of bus installations in August. Together, these two projects will replace the legacy Transit Radio System and provide new services for Metro customers, including automated stop announcements and interior electronic signs. The entire Metro fleet will be converted to the new system by the end of 2011.

■ **Task force update** — The 28-member Regional Transit Task Force has begun work on its mission to recommend a policy framework for Metro. The task force will recommend criteria for systematically increasing or decreasing Metro’s bus system depending on available revenues. It will also discuss state and federal legislative issues that will help Metro achieve a stated vision. The task force will attempt to balance land use, social equity and environmental justice, financial sustainability, geographic equity, economic development, and productivity and efficiency in its recommendations. Its groundwork was laid at the first meeting at the end of March. At the second meeting, in April, Metro staff members provided an overview of Metro, its service delivery, and its policies. At the May meeting the group was briefed on the King County Auditor’s 2009 transit performance



Staffers strum for St. Pat's—Five musically inclined employees (and one spouse) played Celtic music in the King Street Center lobby at lunchtime on March 17. Pictured, from left to right, are Brian Duncan (fiddle), Debra Billups (mandolin and baritone ukulele), Drew Robinson (fiddle, vocals), Dale Cummings (guitar, vocals), and Anna Clemenger (bodhrán, whistles, vocals). Not pictured: Judith Cummings (harp, vocals).

audit and the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2040 growth and transportation plans. The task force meets at least monthly. For more information, visit www.kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce.

■ **Annual security retreat** — The annual Transit Operations Security Retreat, dedicated to helping Metro provide its operators and customers with a safe and secure environment, was held March 16. Transit Operations Security Coordinator **John Lewis** hosted the event, which was attended by operators and chiefs from all transit bases, plus Metro and union leadership and the Metro Transit Police. General Manager **Kevin Desmond** summarized Metro's responses to the January assaults on a customer in the downtown transit tunnel and on a Route 124 transit operator. Metro Transit Police Chief **Dave Jutilla** briefed the group on current policing efforts, including fare enforcement and the tactical deployment of transit police officers. Project Manager **Roland Bradley** provided an update on on-board camera system procurement. A prototype of a protective shield installed in a bus

driver's compartment was on display (see page 1).

Rider satisfaction mixed over September '09 service changes — Metro made significant changes to several bus routes last September. Before-and-after measures of rider satisfaction show mixed results regarding changes to routes 8, 36, 48, 106, and 174 (and new route 124, formerly part of Route 174). Mean satisfaction ratings showed little change for Route 36 and mixed results for routes 48 and 174/124. Satisfaction was most negatively affected for routes 106 and 174. A broad look across total results revealed a less satisfied base of respondents after the service change. In five out of six categories (trip time, waiting areas, physical characteristics, transfers, and frequency/reliability), ratings got worse for one to three measured elements of service. Personal safety was the only category in which no specific service ratings went down. In the frequency/reliability category, mean ratings went up significantly for only one item: how often the bus runs on weekends.

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On the move

Lloyd Flatum, mechanic — April 19
James Lee, mechanic — April 19
Jun Li, mechanic — April 19
Charles Scott, equipment service worker — April 19
Jesse Shelton, mechanic — April 19
Jonathan Thornbrough, mechanic — April 19
William Unrau, mechanic — April 19
Randy Winders, manager — April 19

In Our Thoughts

Wally Everson, retired service supervisor (Transit Operations — 1986), passed away on April 12
Wayne Hom, retired schedule planner (31+ years, Service Development—2005), passed away on May 30

In Transit



We'll Get You There

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to **In Transit**, KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Clemenger**: 206-263-6482 or anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov.

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ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Design and Construction

Ron Quist, engineer V — May 31; 22 years

General Manager Office

Linda Smith, business and finance officer II — June 30; 24+ years

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Tomi Geivett, transit planner II (Accessible Services) — April 14; 18 years

Operations

Will Hoffard, operator (South Base) — May 31; 16 years

Rail

Paul “Andy” Balder, streetcar operator — Dec. 31; 35 years

Vehicle Maintenance

Jerry Arves, lead mechanic — April 30; 26+ years

David Cluett, electronic technician — April 1; 30+ years

Tom Dannenfeler, electronic technician — May 1; 12+ years

Mary Jensen, supervisor of basic business systems — May 14; 19+ years

Doug King, mechanic — April 2; 29+ years

Tom Lambe, mechanic — April 16; 30+ years

Promotions and Job Changes

Operations

Alim Abdullah to transit operator (Atlantic Base) from rail operator (Link Light Rail)

Arnie Becker to roving base chief from supervisor (Link Light Rail)

Al DeSart to transit operator (North Base) from streetcar operator (South Lake Union Streetcar/SLUS)

Charles Oates to transit operator (North Base) from streetcar operator (South Lake Union Streetcar)

Cathy Vujovich to base chief (South Base) from first-line supervisor (Operations Training)

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Lorrie Alfonsi to transit planner III from transit planner III (term-limited); replaces Tomi Geivett, retired

Rail

Marcus Calija to streetcar operator (South Lake Union Streetcar) from transit operator (North Base)

Salvador Cortes to streetcar operator (South Lake Union Streetcar) from transit operator (Central Base)

Jeff Craig to rail supervisor from first-line supervisor (Transit Control Center)

Douglas Hall to rail operator from transit operator (Central Base)

Harmony Hunter to rail supervisor from first-line supervisor (Transit Control Center)

Donald McClain to rail operator from transit operator (South Base)

Carl Offenheiser to acting signal and communication chief from signal and communication technician

Justin Swanson to rail operator from transit operator (Central Base)

Kevin Winter to acting rail operations chief (correction) from rail supervisor

Service Development

Steve Cahan to transit planner III from transit planner II (Transit Route Facilities)

Vehicle Maintenance

Todd Brown to acting transit maintenance analyst from mechanic (Atlantic Base)

Nick Caraway to mechanic (Atlantic Base) from streetcar maintainer (South Lake Union Streetcar)

Cindy Sattler to acting functional analyst II from data administrator

New Hires

Rail

Louis DiFazio, rail signal and communication technician — March 30

Steve McColl, rail electrical worker — April 21

Robert McKee, transit facilities electrician — April 21

Vehicle Maintenance

Aaron Allen, equipment service worker — February 22

Enrique Curameng, equipment service worker — April 19

Chad Everett, equipment service worker — February 22

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